

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

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SSO-00 INRE-00 ACDA-07 AID-05 CCO-00 DHA-02 SCS-03

PC-01 OPR-02 SCA-01 MCT-01 /095 W

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O P 121000Z MAR 77

FM AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1970

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

USIA WASHDC PRIORITY

USCINCEUR//ECJ4/7//

DIA WASHDC

SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUBUMBASHI 0037/1

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS CG AO PFOR PINS

SUBJ: ANGOLA OCCUPIES SHABAN BORDER TOWNS: THE VIEW FROM LUBUMBASHI

SUMMARY:

1. THE OCCUPATION OF THE SHABAN TOWNS OF KAPANGA, DILOLO AND KISENGE ON MAR 8 BY FORCES FROM ANGOLA TOOK THE LOCAL POPULATIN BY SURPRISE, ALTHOUGH LOCAL MILITARY AUTHORITIES SEEMED TO HAVE SOME ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE OF PENDING THREAT. AFTER INITIAL SLOPPY RESPONSE, MILITARY UNITS REACTED TO INVASION WITH REASONABLE SPEED, ALTHOUGH HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON GECAMINES AND RAILROAD FOR LOGISTICS AND COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT. LOCAL OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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CAUTIOUS ABOUT IDENTIFYING INVADERS. ON MAR 11, GROUP OCCUPYING KAPANGA IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS KATANGAN GENDARMES. IF INVADING FORCE CONSISTS OF FORMER KATANGANS OR DECIDES TO CLAIM TO BE KATANGAN, AREA COULD BE SUBJECTED TO MORE SUSTAINED THREAT THAN IF INVADERS ARE ANGOLAN TROOPS WHOSE AIM MIGHT BE LITTLE MORE THAN SHOWING MOBUTU GOVT THEY ARE WELL IN CONTROL OF THEIR OWN COUNTRY AND ABLE TO HARASS ZAIRE. END SUMMARY.

2. INVASION OF SOUTHWESTERN SHABA AND OCCUPATION OF TOWNS OF DILOLO, KISENGE, AND KAPANGA ON MAR 8 TOOK LOCAL POPULATION BY SURPRISE. LOCAL ZAIRIAN MILITARY AUTHORITIES SEEMED TO HAVE ADVANCE WARNING THAT SOMETHING WAS LIKELY TO HAPPEN, BUT LACKED SPECIFIC INFORMATION. PRIVATE PLANE WHICH STRAYED OVER ANGOLAN BORDER NEAR KISENGE ABOUT MAR 1 OBSERVED MILITARY BUILD UP IN AREA AND TOOK ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE FROM GROUND. INCIDENT REPORTED TO AUTHORITIES. AT MEETING WITH EIGHTH REGIONAL COMMANDER GENERAL ZONGIA ON DAY BEFORE INVASION, HE SPOKE OF THREAT OF COUP AGAINST MOBUTU, BUT NOT SPECIFICALLY ABOUT ANGOLAN CONNECTION.

3. MORE INFORMED LOCAL CITIZENRY SPECULATE THAT THERE WAS PROBABLY PRIOR PROVOCATION BY ZAIRIAN TROOPS. PEOPLE VAGUELY AWARE OF INCIDENT ABOUT 10 DAYS EARLIER IN ANGOLAN VILLAGE NEAR BAS-ZAIRE. DURING EVENING OF MAR8, RUMORS WERE FLOATING AROUND LUBUMBASHI THAT ZAIRIAN TROOPS IN DILOLO WERE SHOOTING UP THE TOWN, BUT NO REFERENCE THEN TO POSSIBLE ANGOLAN INVOLVEMENT. OTHER SPECULATION CENTERS ON GENERAL HOSTILE RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAS EXISTED BETWEEN ZAIRE AND ANGOLA SINCE NETO TAKE OVER IN SUMMER OF 1975, AGGRAVATED BY RECENT UNFRIENDLY EXCHANGES. BY THIS THEORY, NETO WANTED TO SHOW ZAIRIANS THAT HE STRONGLY IN CONTROL OF HIS OWN COUNTRY, PARTICULARLY IN PREVIOUSLY QUESTIONABLE BORDER REGIONS, AND COULD MAKE TROUBLE FOR ZAIRE WITH EASE.

4. TRIBAL AFFINITIES ACROSS BORDER, HISTORY OF DISSIDENCE IN AREA FORMERLY KNOWN AS KATANGA, AND PRESENCE OF KATANGAN GENDARMES IN ANGOLAN BORDER AREA, REPORTEDLY EAGER TO SEE OVERTHROW OF MOBUTU, PERHAPS LED TO CHOICE OF SOUTHWESTERN SHABA AS MOST CONFIDENTIAL

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VULNERABLE AREA FOR ATTACK. KATANGAN GENDARMES MAY HAVE LED ANGOLANS TO BELIEVE THAT SHABA WAS RIPE FOR REVOLT. BECAUSE OF POPULATION MOVEMENT ACROSS BORDER, ANGOLANS PRESUMABLY AWARE THAT ZAIRIAN MILITARY PRESENCE WAS MINIMAL (APPARENTLY NO FAZ PRESENCE IN DILOLO, FOR EXAMPLE) AND LINES OF COMMUNICATION SLOW DURING RAINY SEASON.

5. WHO ARE THE INVADERS?

ZAIRIANS HAVE BEEN VERY SLOW TO IDENTIFY INVADING FORCE. GEN ZONGIA AT MEETING ON MAR 9 USED WORD "INVADERS" RATHER THAN ANGOLANS OR KATANGAN GENDARMES. THERE HAS YET BEEN NO OFFICIAL MENTION OF KATANGA GENDARMES INVOLVEMENT. CONTINUOUS RUMORS ALSO REFER TO MERCENARIES, BUT NONE YET ACKNOWLEDGED. SOME SPECULATE THAT USE OF TERM MERCENARIES ALLOWS ACCEPTANCE MORE EASILY OF QUICK OCCUPATION OF ZAIRIAN TOWNS BY ENEMY ARMED FORCES. ON MAR 11, INVADING FORCE IN KAPANGA IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES AS KATANGAN GENDARMES ALLOWED MISSIONARIES TO MAKE RADIO CONTACT. THIS WAS FIRST STATEMENT THAT INVADERS CONSIDERED THEMSELVES KATANGANS. IT REMAINS UNCERTAIN WHETHER ALL THREE

OCCUPYING ELEMENTS ARE GOING BY KATANGAN IDENTIFICATION.

6. MILITARY UNITS REACTED TO INVASION WITH REASONABLE SPEED,
BUT HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON NON-MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS AND LOGISTICS.
BORDER AREAS WERE LIGHTLY DEFENDED. MOST TROOPS REPORTED TO HAVE
FLED UPON FIRST SIGN OF DANGER. ALL INITIAL REPORTS CAME THROUGH
SNCZ RAILROAD CHANNELS, THOUGH SOMETIMES FROM LOCAL MILITARY
PERSONNEL. SNCZ OFFERED RAILROAD FACILITIES TO TRANSPORT TROOPS.
FIRST TRAIN DEPARTED 0100 HOURS MAR 9, BUT MANY OF TROOPS,
PERHAPS UP TO 50 PCT, REPORTED TO HAVE DESERTED BEFORE TRAIN
REACHED KOLWEZI. SUBSEQUENT TROOP MOVEMENTS BY TRAIN AND TRUCK

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

SSO-00 INRE-00 ACDA-07 AID-05 CCO-00 DHA-02 SCS-03

PC-01 OPR-02 SCA-01 MCT-01 /095 W

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O P 121000Z MAR 77

FM AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1972

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LAOS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

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DIA WASHDC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LUBUMBASHI 0037/2

WERE

MORE SUCCESSFUL. UNTIL DISPATCHED TROOPS ARRIVED IN
TROUBLED AREA, GEN ZONGIA HAD NO CONTACT WITH FRONT AND NO
KNOWLEDGE OF ANY CASUALTIES. AS OF 2330 ON MAR 9, HE ALSO WAS
NOT AWARE THAT KAPANGA HAD BEEN SEIZED 36 HOURS EARLIER. ON

MAR 10, REGIONAL CIVILIAN AND MILITARY AUTHORITIES MOVED HEAD-QUARTERS TO KOLWEZI TO BE CLOSER TO FRONT AND WHERE LOGISTICAL SUPPORT COULD BE COMMANDEERED FROM GECAMINES.

7. IN LUBUMBASHI BEGINNING MAR 8, TROOPS SURROUNDED THE POST OFFICE AND RADIO STATION BETWEEN 1600 AND 0700 EACH DAY. THE
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NUMBER OF BARRICADES AROUND THE CITY AND ON ROADS OUTSIDE OF THE CITY INCREASED: ABOUT 5 ROAD BLOCKS BETWEEN THE TOWN AND THE AIRPORT AND A DOZEN BETWEEN LUBUMBASHI AND KOLWEZI. DURING THE DAYTIME, BUSINESS CONTINUES AS USUAL, BUT SOLDIERS MILLING ABOUT PROVIDE A CONTINUOUS REMINDER OF PROBLEM. STRONG SECURITY MEASURES AND CURFEW OFFICIALLY INTENDED TO PROTECT TOWN FROM OUTSIDE THREAT. REGIONAL COMMISSIONER SPEAKING BEFORE ALL-ZAIRIAN AUDIENCE OF BUSINESSMEN SAID THAT ANGOLAN SPIES WERE PRESENT IN THE CITY UNDER THE COMMAND OF AN EXPATRIATE. MOST EXPATRIATES ASSUME THAT TIGHT SECURITY IN ALL COPPERBELT TOWNS IS DUE TO CENTRAL GOVT FEAR THAT EITHER ELEMENTS OF LOCAL POPULATION HAVE CLOSE TIES WITH INVADERS OR NEWS OF INVASION WILL STIMULATE LOCAL UPRISING.

8. LUBUMBASHI REMAINS QUIET WITH ALMOST BUSINESS AS USUAL AIR. HEAVY PRESENCE OF TROOPS FOR TWO DAYS BEFORE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF ATTACK HAS LED TO MANY LOCAL RUMORS. PARTICULARLY, IN CITIES NATURE OF THREAT EXAGGERATED. POPULATION IN COMMUNITIES CLOSER TO THE BORDER REPORTEDLY MUCH MORE WORRIED. EARLY REPORTS CLAIM MUCH OF POPULATION IN DILOLO, KAPANGA, KINENGE HAS FLED. SEVERAL REPORTS OF PANIC IN KOLWEZI, BUT STRONG MILITARY PRESENCE AND DUSK TO DAWN CURFEW SHOULD KEEP SITUATION UNDER CONTROL. SEVERAL SOURCES HAVE REPORTED, NEVERTHELESS, AN UNDERCURRENT OF SUPPORT FOR INVADING FORCE. MOST EUROPEANS SEEM TO VIEW INVASION AS ANOTHER IRRITANT TO DAILY FRUSTRATION OF LIFE IN LUBUMBASHI, BUT DO NOT EXPECT INVASION TO LAST MORE THAN A FEW DAYS.

9. THERE WERE NO INITIAL REPORTS OF PROPERTY DESTRUCTION OR KILLING BY THE INVADING FORCE. CONSIDERABLE CONCERN HAS BEEN EXPRESSED ABOUT WHAT ZAIRIAN TROOPS MIGHT DO WHEN THEY REACH THE OCCUPIED TOWNS. LOCAL OBSERVERS SAY INHABITANTS MAY BE MORE FEARFUL OF LINGALA SPEAKING ZAIRIAN TROOPS AND POSSIBLE LOOTING THAN THEY ARE OF INVADERS WHO MAY IN MANY CASES BE TRIBAL BROTHERS.

10. GENERAL FEELING PERSISTS THAT INVASION CANNOT BE SUSTAINED. IF TROOPS ARE ANGOLAN OR CUBAN THEY ARE EXPECTED TO WITHDRAW AT
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THE FIRST POSSIBLE SIGN OF CONFRONTATION, HAVING SUCCEEEDED IN CAUSING EMBARRASSEMENT FOR MOBUTU GOVT. HOWEVER, IF TROOPS ARE KATANGAN GENDARMES, NETO MAY HAVE GIVEN PERMISSION FOR A MORE SUSTAINED DRIVE INTO SHABA ON GROUNDS THAT NOTHING LOST IF GENDARMES DEFEATED. IF SO-CALLED GENDARMES MEET WITH SUCCESS, HOWEVER, MORE ANGOLAN TROOPS MAY DECIDE TO ENTER COUNTRY UNDER GUISE OF KATANGAN NATIONALISM TO GUIDE LIBERATION EFFORT. THE LONGER IT REQUIRES THE ZAIRIAN GOVT TO EXPEL THE INVADERS, THE GREATER THE LIKELIHOOD OF INTERNAL DISSIDENCE WITHIN SHABA.

11. EMBASSY COMMENT:

FOREGOING WHICH RECEIVED AT EMBASSY BY POUCH AT 100 MAR 12, WAS DRAFTED BEFORE KNOWLEDGE OF ANNOUNCEMENT MADE IN PARIS MAR 11 BY CONGOLESENATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT WHICH CLAIMED SHABA OPERATION WAS POPULAR UPRISING LED BY KATANGANS.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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